

Liberty
Russia

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*Is there
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in*

CHANGING RUSSIA?

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Changing Russia

Is There Religious Liberty in the U.S.S.R?

by

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Changing Russia

Is There Religious Liberty in the U.S.S.R.?

By Col. Rev. F. J. Miles, D.S.O.; O.B.E.; V.D.; F. Ph. S.

For the sake of clarity we define our terms. We commence with the Geographical. "Russia" is often used to cover the land itself and others that surround it on the West and South, from the Baltic to the Balkans. Deputationists of Missionary Societies and writers of articles in the magazines of these Russian organizations refer to their work in Russia, whereas they have no such work. Their service is confined to the Border States. There is no intention of being misleading. Until the Fall of 1918 Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were provinces of Russia proper. They then became independent republics. The Polish Ukraine and Bessarabia in Rumania subsequently broke away from Russia. Russia proper (that is the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) covers one-sixth of the earth's surface, one-fourth of Asia and one-third of Europe. When it is 12 noon in Moscow it is 7 o'clock in the evening in Vladivostock. One can travel between East and West by express train continuously for ten days and nights and still be within the Soviet Union.

RUSSIAN POPULATION

Within this vast territory there are today 193 million people made up of 170 races speaking 120 different tongues and dialects. They are divided among 13 constituent republics, the populations being so varied that there are, for instance, the Tartar Republic and the German Republic contiguous to each other on the lower Volga. There are Russians, White Russians, Little Russians, Georgians, and Ukrainians, Caucasians

and Circassians. There are folk influenced by European (so-called Christian) civilization and culture and there are Mongolians with Asiatic aspect. There are Greek Orthodox Christians and millions of Mohame-dans. There is manifold variety and diversity, but the attitude and actions of the Soviet government toward religion are one and the same toward them all.

Outside the actual Soviet Borders there are another forty million Russians. These are chiefly found in border lands extending from the Baltic to the Balkans, though there are communities established throughout Europe, composed chiefly of White Russian Refugees. There are 35,000 of these in London, England; 80,000 out of the half million in France are in Paris. There are thousands in Carpatho Russ (Ruthania) in Czecho-slavakia. It is among these that various Russian missionary agencies are exercising an evangelical and evangelistic ministry. These all, in and out of the U.S.S.R., form what is numerically the greatest white race in the world, 233 million people. They constitute a great and grave challenge to the Christian Church.

OUR PURPOSE

is certainly not to criticise Russia, its people or its government. It is a mistake to draw comparisons between Russia and other European lands. For a fair and just evaluation of Russia under the Soviet regime it must be compared and contrasted with Russia under the Czarist government. This is not our purpose. We do not discuss political, social or industrial developments. To convert a nation of peasants into artisans producing goods by mass production; to transform the working conditions; to collectivise farming; to convert a nation of illiterates into an educated people: these and the like are masterly achievements. If one contrasts the old army with its aristocratic officers and

soldiers who were serfs with the mighty military machine of today: the provision made for the men in the ranks in time of peace and their exploits during the war, one can only frankly recognize how tremendous has been the progressive change and the magnificent and masterly transformation that is manifest. Some of the finest modern buildings erected under the Soviet (as for instance in Kharkov), are army clubs for the rank and file: in most striking contrast to the lack of provision and hard lot of the soldier under the Czarist regime. **But our purpose is religious.** The fact that we are allies in fighting a common foe does not carry with it the necessity to shut our eyes. Coöperation along one line does not exclude frank comment on other issues. We shall do no good to any one by wearing blinkers and glossing over facts. Wishful thinking would lead us to believe that Russia as our ally has changed her attitude to religion and has fallen into practice along the line of our ideas of civil and religious liberty. But if we are really to help the Russian peoples as their true friends we must face facts: understand their position, appreciate the differences and difficulties and so be prepared to serve Russia and the Russians along wise, friendly, practical and progressive lines.

Our purpose is strictly confined to the religious aspect of things as they are in Russia today. We have not written the "Christian" aspect for the attitude of the Russian Government and of the Communist Party behind it is one and the same toward all religion—Mohamedan, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Evangelical. If we refer to any political action it will only be in order to set the anti-religious activity in proper focus against the governmental background. Anything we write concerning ministers and churches applies to Moulvies and Mosques, Rabbis and Synagogues; for the attitude of the

U.S.S.R. government is one and the same toward them all. An introduction to the main answer to our title question may prove helpful. No good can arise from extravagant and/or extreme statements. Nor can any real gain issue from refusal to face facts. Glossing over the truth can never in the long run be of real value to anyone. So we seek to be candid without contentious criticism; to record facts without bias or prejudice. The revolt against religion and reaction against the church was not a sudden eruption. It was the outbreak of a fire that had been slumbering and smouldering beneath the surface for years. It was the volcanic eruption of ever-intensifying fires of wrath that finally were too powerful to be restrained. It was evolution rather than revolution.

The Russian Church was a branch of the Greek Orthodox Church, which claims to be the oldest section of Christ's Church. It is easily understood that any fundamental change in the conditions of Czarist Russia must have involved conflict with the Orthodox Church for, from the days of Peter the Great it had been both in form and fact, directly controlled by the State. Quite fairly it could be described as a branch of the Civil Service. It was inexplicably interwoven with the government in general and the Police in particular. The present writer has seen in Russia proper many ikons¹; pictures and symbols which conjoined the Royal Family, Patriarchs and Police Officials or Army Autocrats. "For wealth, power, prestige, and promotion, the clergy depended upon the autocracy. Subservience to the Romanoff dynasty, involving the acceptance of an unenlightened and anti-democratic outlook, characterised the church as an institution".² The separation

1. Ikon (Greek)—Image, as for instance, in Hebrews 1:3 Christ is described as "The image (ikon) of God's person").

2. "Baptists in the U.S.S.R." by Rev. J. H. Rushbrooke, M.A.; D.D.; L.L.D.; President of the Baptist World Alliance and Authority on European and Russian religious affairs.

of church and State was the consequence of the character of the church Hierarchy. In its final, present form it is expressed in Article 124 of the Soviet Constitution which reads:

"In order to ensure to citizens freedom of conscience, the church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the State, and the school from the church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens." (Note: the change in language expressing the different content of freedoms³)

We shall return to this constitution provision later. We do not attempt to discuss the right or wrong of close connection between church and state or the ills that may issue from a State church. We affirm that in this case the natural reaction of the atheistical Communist Party issued in the separation of Church and State.

The State Church in Czarist Russia was led by that Holy Devil of Russia, Rasputin, and colleagues equally illiterate and immoral. There were notable exceptions such as the Patriarch Tikhon who died in prison, and the Metropolitan Benjamin, who was shot, because they refused to be disloyal to their Lord. At his so-called trial the latter said, "If I must die, I will die as a Christian," and he did! That lecherous and hypnotic Rasputin dominated the Court in general and the Czarina in particular. He symbolized the corruption that had eaten the heart out of the hierarchy of the church in Russia. Lord Acton in graphic phrase styled the church and state combination as "**The gilded Crutch of Absolutism.**" Bolshevism, by separating them, pruned the dead wood out of the church.

3. "The constitution (article 124) underlines the necessity of anti-religious propaganda" Em Yaroslavsky in Russian in "On anti-religious propaganda," Moscow, 1937. Pravda (Truth) defined "Freedom of religious worship" as "Freedom to perform religious rites."

In the Provinces particularly the teaching of the Priests (when they taught at all) was almost unbelievably ridiculous. For instance—they taught that when a Christian died his body remained intact until the judgment day. Under the Pechersky Monastery at Kieff (Russia's Ancient Capital) the ground contains properties that preserve bodies buried in it. The monks took advantage of this. They dug up the bodies, started a mummy factory in the monastery in order to repair and complete the damaged ones and then sold them to be exhibited in Cathedrals and churches for veneration purposes. In St. Isaac's Cathedral in Lenin-grad⁴ there are three of these lying side by side. The central one a priest, the two outside ones peasants—to demonstrate that not sainthood but chemical and mineral properties in the soil preserved them.

While a corpse lay in a coffin, a Greek Orthodox passport to heaven (in ancient Greek that cannot be read) had to be placed in the right hand or "the departed" could not enter Paradise. It had to be purchased from the Priest. We must not overlook the fact that there were individuals within the Church who, realizing this corruption, recognized the need for cleansing and change. Doubtless many of these honestly joined "**The Living Church**," inaugurated by the Soviet government as an offset to the obstruction of the Orthodox Priests and frequently derided as a project of Bolshevism. It was impossible that any liberation of the people or development of democracy could take place without a clash with the church. Apart from the fact that Bolshevism⁵ was and is fundamentally atheistic, its leaders reasoned that if the crudities, superstitions and fanciful practices were the issue of reading the Bible, the Book should be banned. If the teaching of the Priests resulted in the stupid practices of

4. Now, as are St. Basils on the Red (ancient Russian for "Beautiful") Square in Moscow and St. Andrews in Kieff, Anti-God museums and show places.

adults that teaching should be absolutely forbidden to children and youths. It is still a criminal offence to gather three girls or boys under 18 years of age to teach them **any** kind of religion. It is counter-revolutionary, merits and meets with the maximum sentence of ten years in Siberian Concentration Camp. The Bolsheviks and Mensheviks⁵ alike honestly believed in the slogan adopted from Karl Marx:

"Religion is the Opium of the People"

If the Soviet Government (itself governed by "the Party") had prohibited all propaganda either for or against religion before "the age of discretion" they could have put up a strong argument in support of their principle. But they prevented the "pro" and gave every support and made every provision for the "con" as is evidenced in Article 125 of the Constitution, which reads:

"In conformity with the interests of the toilers, and in order to strengthen the Socialist system, the citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed by law:

- a. Freedom of speech;
- b. Freedom of press;
- c. Freedom of assembly and of holding mass meetings;
- d. Freedom of street processions and demonstrations. These rights of citizens⁶ are ensured by placing at the disposal of the toilers and their organizations printing presses, stocks of paper, public buildings, the means of communication and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights."

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- 5. Socialists met for conference in London. Leaders like Prince Kropotkin were present. They reached a division on how Socialism should be brought into actual practice. The minority favoured evolutionary means; the majority held by revolutionary methods. The Russian words for majority and minority are "Bolshevik" and "Menshevik."
 - 6. Until recently Christians in general and clergy in particular were deprived of all citizenship rights. These have now been restored. Christians may vote (for what it is worth when there are only Soviet candidates) and exercise most of the privileges enjoyed by their fellow citizens.

We have refrained from italicizing any of the above. We believe that the intelligent reader, reading between the lines, will see that articles 124 to 126 (which develops the law in favor of anti-religious propaganda) make impossible on behalf of any religion the propaganda processes provided for the anti-religious programme.

Let us be fair. Nothing good can issue from being unjust. Up to the end of 1927 the logical issues of the anti-God and anti-religious programme were not drastically carried out. The

STUNDISTS⁷

were permitted to function. They held meetings, carried on evangelistic missionary work among Mohammedans and heathen, and in that year the Baptists were actually authorized to open in Moscow a school for Preachers in commemoration of the **Diamond Jubilee of the Baptist Brotherhood in Russia**. Ivan S. Prokhanoff⁸ who founded the "Union of Evangelical Christians" in 1908 was actually allowed to print an edition of the Bible in Russian, the one issue of any part of the Sacred Scriptures printed in the U.S.S.R. since the Revolution. But a feeling of resentment and opposition had been growing against these "sectarians." At the outset the opposition and persecution was centered on the State Church and these free bodies were accord-

7. From the German, probably taking its rise in the German Republic, established on the lower Volga by German Christians who could not worship as their consciences directed in their own land. The word refers to the hour and describes those Christians who meet by the hour for prayer: i.e. vital, vigorous evangelicals; practically all of whom are "Baptists" in practice, though not always in name.

8. Prokhanoff was a Baptist, educated in the Baptist College in Bristol, England. He thought that the term Baptist was unscriptural. The present writer chaffed him but could get no answer to his query as to where in the New Testament he got his title from. He has been accused of playing into the hands of the Soviet government. But "honor to whom honor is due." He certainly provided hymn books and helpful literature to the free church in Russia and among Russians.

ed a freedom that they had not enjoyed under the Czarist regime⁹. Resulting from this new found liberty, they advanced by leaps and bounds. The Party became alarmed. They stated that these folks proclaimed a doctrine diametrically opposed to the ideology of the Communist Party and urged that their propaganda should be prohibited. In 1928 **Tickhomirov**, while paying tribute to the zeal of the Baptists, gave the party the facts concerning their rapid and remarkable increase. It was claimed that they "appeared to be more concerned with their own future than that of the people as a whole." Probably the refusal of these Stundist-bodies and their members to bear arms accentuated the opposition to them. In 1929 legal and administrative restrictions were placed on Evangelical Liberty. We need not detail them as they still apply and will be dealt with when we describe the actual religious conditions in the real Russia of today.

It was at this period that a revision of the Soviet Constitution began. While retaining the right of the citizens to carry on all kinds of propaganda **against** religion, it prohibited any type of propaganda **for** religion. Through various vicissitudes these restrictions have been confirmed and are now in force in accordance with the "Stalin Constitution" of 1936.

7. On preceding sheet

9. *William Fetler* (later William Mahlof Fetler, Mahlof being his pen name) was trained in Spurgeon's (Pastor's) College, London. Under the inspiration and guidance of the then principal, Dr. A. McCaig (for he had declared his desire to go to China as a missionary) at the end of his course he returned to his own people and land, (He was born in Tukums, Latvia, then a Russian Province) and became the founder, under Dr. McCaig and his colleagues, and the first missionary of the Russian Missionary Society. He established the cause and erected the great *Dom Evangelia* (House of the Gospel) in St. Petersburg. Condemned, through the intervention of Russian aristocrats who had been influenced by the ministry of the then Lord Radstock, his sentence was reduced, and he was exiled for life by the Czarist government. Prof. N. V. Naprash, Principal of a Russian Missionary organization supported by the Northern Baptist Convention, was assistant pastor of the Dom Evangelia. With many other leaders of Russian Religious agencies, he began his evangelistic work with the R.M.S.

THE BIBLE BANNED

Teachers were banished and the Bible School established by Baptists in Moscow thereby closed. No article in defense of religion could be published. No religious periodicals could be imported. The possibility of printing the Bible was brought to an end in May, 1929. Since then it has been a criminal offence to print, publish, distribute or circulate the Sacred Scriptures in whole or in any part within the Soviet Union. It is illegal to import such. Two young men, having obtained their visas from Moscow (no authority outside that city can issue a visa) were about to visit the U.S.S.R. under Intourist¹⁰ asked me to supply them with New Testaments in Russian. I refused because I knew that they would not be permitted to take them in. One was so very persistent that finally as a tribute to his persistence, I gave him a supply. At the customs on Leningrad wharf his suit case was turned upside down on the counter. He was asked what he was doing with the Testaments, for what purpose he was taking them into Russia. They were all confiscated and burned. He was under interrogation for five hours, the officials seeking to discover whether anyone within the U.S.S.R. had asked him to bring the Bibles in. Finally he was released and allowed to continue his tour under surveillance until he left the country. These customs officers go through the books of visitors page by page to make sure that no letters are being

10. Advertises as an ordinary Tourist Agency. Is a department of the Soviet Government Visitors MUST travel under "Intourist" using their coupons, staying in their hotels, using their means of transportation, led by Intourist guide interpreters. Knowing no Russian, they MUST depend on information gained from the guide. In the morning in the Intourist Hotel they are given a list of places that they may go to see. (Freedom of choice to go where they like) But every one of the places is a government show place and the conductor efficiently guides and effectively teaches the tourist party. There are 193 million people in the U.S.S.R. made up of 170 races speaking 120 languages and dialects. When these Intourist guests return to the U.S.A. after a couple of weeks in this vast land and tell us "all about Russia" we may well conclude that they are handling the truth carelessly.

smuggled into the country descriptive of the outside world.

It was made and still is a punishable offense (10 years in Siberia) to gather three young people to teach them religion. The R.M.S. founded the first eight Sunday Schools on Russian soil. The present writer has often visited the first. Unfortunately the Germans bombed his home and destroyed his library and study; burned all his books, sermons, photos, records of travel, card indexes and the accumulation of over half a century of ministerial life and labour, so that he cannot give the reader a picture of this building. No Sunday School can exist, no Scriptural teaching may take place in the U.S.S.R. today. In a recent volume on Russia in Prophecy the writer inadvertently makes a slip on this subject. We must be just. Parents are not forbidden to teach their children. The official definition of "a class" was "a group of children exceeding three in number, if taught by anyone other than a parent of the children." Nor is any citizen prohibited from possessing a Bible. That is, according to law, though overzealous officers may go (and have gone) beyond the law in this respect. This prohibition bore more heavily on the Stundists than on the State Church. The latter had depended on sacramental and sacerdotal exercises controlled and carried out by the priesthood; while Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Mennonites and Molokans had depended on the Church functioning through the Sunday School to give religious instruction to their children. The Orthodox priesthood carried on the ceremonial rites of the Church, but the Baptist bodies were ministered to by many lay brethren who earned their own livelihood at trades and preached out of love and longing to make known "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." They had no exclusive priesthood.

PARKS OF "REST FROM CULTURE"

While all religious propaganda was prohibited, every type of the same was utilized for anti-religious education. The press, the radio, wall newspapers in workshops, lectures, classes and schools were used. These latter were not strictly compulsory but no advance was possible to any who did not attend them when called. In fact non-attendance issued in loss and deprivation of rights, privileges and position and often in persecution. The Soviets have made magnificent provision for the rest and recreation of the people, foremost among these being the "Parks of Culture and Rest." But even in these the radio blares forth Communistic propaganda. One was speaking to the writer styled these "Parks of Rest from Culture," referring to a breakdown of radio broadcasting. Reference to the educational period will be made when we reach the position today. To save space and the reader's time we leave further references along this line until we reach that stage.

We proceed to refer briefly to the

NON-STATE RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS

of Russia. The Slavic races have always been very religious (Acts 17:23-23). Formerly the land we are writing of was called "Holy Russia." Prior to World War I we went to Palestine as Tourists: Russians journeyed there as Pilgrims; we went to see the sights: they went to worship. Always a devout people naturally there emerged from time to time from the State Church companies of those who could not find spiritual satisfaction in ceremonial without content. Believers in God, the Saviour, the Bible, dissatisfied with a Church that was characterised by creed, ceremonial and but little by spiritual depth of character broke away in groups and formed sects that today come un-

der the general characterization and term of "Stundists."

Lunarcharsky, while Commissar for Education in the Central Executive Committee, issued a manifesto in which he said:

"We hate Christians. Even the best of them must be regarded as our worst enemies. They preach love to one's neighbours and pity, which is contrary to our principles. Christian love is a hindrance to the development of the revolution. Down with love for one's neighbours, what we want is hatred. We must know how to hate, for only at this price can we conquer the universe. We have done with the kings of the earth; let us deal now with the Kings of the skies. All religions are poison. They intoxicate and deaden the mind, the will, the conscience. A fight to the death must be declared upon religion. Our task is to destroy all kinds of religion, all kinds of morality."

In the year under review above (1929) he told the world¹¹ how they had gotten on with the job. Using the figures of his own department he stated that while in 1917 there were only 700,000 members of the Communist Party in Russia, in 1927 they numbered 1,700,000; but that for the same period the Stundists had advanced from only 100,000 to over 6 million. The Christians had outlived, outwitnessed and outnumbered the Communists in a decade by 6 to 1, though the former were opposed by Satan and Soviet and the latter were sponsored and supported by the government.

Within this Stundist fold the largest flock is

11. The article quoting official statistics, appeared in Izvestia (News) the chief daily of the government. "Pravda" (Truth) is the daily paper of the Communist Party. (A wag in the Don Cossack country told the writer that "There is no news in the truth and no truth in the news.") "Trud" means work or labour and is the daily for workers. "The Red Star" is the military news sheet. "The Moscow News" in English is for the consumption of folk abroad.

BAPTIST

Their origin in Russia¹² dates from the early years of the second half of the 19th century; and they emerged in both Ukrania (the Border land) and Transcaucasia. In the latter land the subject of Biblical Baptism¹³ came up for discussion among the Molokans and Nikita Voronin, a merchant leader of that community, studying the subject entered upon an enriched spiritual experience. Profoundly convinced of the teaching of the New Testament on the subject he desired baptism as a believer. He had never heard of "the people called Baptists." It was only after his convictions had led to confession that he learned from a German artisan that there were millions in other lands sharing his belief. Immersed on August 20, 1867, there gathered around him a group of like-minded believers who, in 1868, were formed into the **First Russian Baptist Church**. In 1871 there were added to the growing Church brethren V. G. Pavloff¹⁴ and V. V. Ivanoff-Klishnikoff, eager evangelists who subsequently exerted a great influence and gave a tremendous impetus to the movement.

In Ukrania the Stundist movement of German origin gained Russian adherents and solidified and settled down from a somewhat erratic form of pietism into definite Baptist form. Contact between the two movements found its climax in the formation of the **Russian Baptist Union** in 1884. Under the Czarist regime and

12. We are not writing a Baptist history. Their rise (or re-emergence) in Europe goes back to the 16th century. There were scores of thousands of Baptists among the Latvians, Estonians and Germans settlers long before the rise of the revolution. Other bodies, such as the Mennonites and some Molokans (Holy Junipers) also shared Baptist convictions and followed Baptist customs.

13. The Greek Orthodox Church practices Triune Immersion, dipping the child thrice in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, respectively.

14. Later associated with the Russian Missionary Society in its beginnings.

especially under that notorious Procurator of the Holy Synod Pobiedonosteff, they were severely persecuted. They were subjected to exile and imprisonment, the knout, and compelled to conform to compulsory Christening of infants. But "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church": they multiplied marvellously until even the Soviet government had to publish statistics including four million Baptist brethren. The last word leads us to refer to

THE BRETHREN MOVEMENT

The Baptist stream, taking its rise chiefly in the South was joined by a new river that sprang up in the North. Its origin was England for Lord Radstock, a "Plymouth Brother" was invited by an aristocratic Russian lady to visit St. Petersburg (subsequently Petrograd and now Leningrad; at that time the capital of Russia; founded as such by Peter the Great). The first of several of his visits occurred in 1874 and many members of the aristocracy were won for Christ.¹⁵ His preaching, particularly in what we call "drawing-room meetings" was most effective. His converts included Count M. M. Korff, who became leader of the R.M.S.

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15. His first convert was a Countess. She felt that the Court of the Czar was no place for a converted woman. She renounced her rank, became a commoner, took the name of Madame Chertkoff, opened a gospel hall on her own estate and was a main supporter of the R.M.S. work in St. Petersburg. The revolution stripped her of all that she had except a house standing in three acres of land at Southbourne, Bournemouth in S.W. England. She had no means of support. Five gentlemen connected with the R.M.S. took over her property, gave her an annuity and provided for her companion, Annie Pevensky, who still lives there. This syndicate erected a meeting hall, dining hall, hostel and other buildings. "Slavanka" (Place of Glory) became a Christian Guest Home throughout the year. The R.M.S. began to hold an annual conference there 22 years ago. Now other missionary societies with a common scriptural basis—proclaiming a whole Christ from a whole Bible for "the whole wide world" hold annual conferences there throughout the summer. Charles Phillips, Esq. F.R.G.S. who has been the Hon. Treas. in Chief of the R.M.S. since 1907 is the managing director and chairman of the Trustees of this great conference center.

section in Switzerland (his daughter still survives him there) and **Bobrinsky** (minister of State) and **Colonel Pashkoff** a well-known and most influential Christian speaker. They evangelized the workers on their own estates, printed and distributed gospel leaflets and organized social service in the spirit of their Master. While, like the Northern Stundists, they separated from the State Church (as did their forerunners under Darby and Kelly in England) they were not organized and their convictions were varied and somewhat loosely held. But the superior culture of the "Pashkovite" leaders saved these brethren from excesses that characterized the early days of the Stundists and their convictions soon consolidated along common, sane, sound and scriptural lines. Their convictions were so concrete and strong by 1884 that meeting in conference with Baptist representatives they were unable to agree and so they continued their separate existence. But this very conference, which should have issued in the strengthening of the common cause had an unfortunate opposite effect. It drew the attention of political authorities and state clergy to the irregular Christian activities centering in St. Petersburg with the result that Brethren leaders **Korff** and **Pashkoff** were exiled.

When the Soviet abolished private property the religious edifices were not exempted. We must be just. The government nationalised **all** property, including the churches. It did not work. There is plenty of private property in Russia today. Cathedrals (see page —) churches, mosques and synagogues were converted to secular use: workshops, warehouses, offices, **Kolhoz** (grain stores for collective farms), small hospitals and apartment houses, worker's clubs, dance halls and even public conveniences! The R.M.S. bought a block of land on the **Vasilie Ostroff** in St. Petersburg and on it erected the

DOM EVANGELIA (see page 19)

wherein thousands of souls have found Christ. The R.M.S. still owns (it was opened free of debt) but does not possess it. Confiscated and converted by the Soviet it is now a worker's club for the men who make nails in the metal works on the opposite side of the street. But our believers were allowed to meet in a hall attached to a former Greek Orthodox Church. They and another group were each allowed to use the building two evenings a week, on payment. Then the local Soviet required the hall for use as a dining hall for girls. They turned our people out. They have been "driven from pillar to post," harried, handicapped, hindered in every way possible, yet on the 29th day of January, 2 years ago, that little band of poor, persecuted Christians baptized on confession of faith 50 adult converts in one service.

These Stundists—Baptist, Brethren, Evangelical Christians, Mennonites—had no connection with the State, did not receive any support from it. That is why the reaction against religion and the revolt against the church did not adversely affect them. As a matter of fact, apart from their common refusal to bear arms, most of these Stundists favoured the revolution: they were decidedly opposed to the Czarist regime and they welcomed the change toward what was expected to be a democratic form of government.

Before we pass to a consideration of Religion in Russia today, we must, even at the cost of a few extra pages, and increase of expense, take cognizance of some facts that will give us full understanding and appreciation of what has happened during the transitional period.

This booklet issued during the last quarter of 1943, must necessarily take cognizance of present developments.

SUNDAY THE DAY OF REST

has been restored to the people. Few American and British folk seem to have heard of this drastic change and unfortunately where they have they have been too quick to construe it as a religious gesture. It was (is) nothing of the sort. After the French Revolution a ten-day week was substituted for the seven-day period. It did not work either materially or morally. On national, industrial, physical and ethical grounds the government was constrained to go back to the restful and recuperative Divine provision. For somewhat similar reason though the other way round, the five- and six-day week of the Communist Party and Soviet government did not work out as anticipated. So last year the government officially went back to one day in seven and restored the observance of Sunday as a day of rest. Emelyan Yaroslavsky, leader of the Bezboznik (The Godless) protested. He claimed that it would be regarded by the common people as a religious gesture, so diametrically opposed to Communist principles. He begged the Stalin government to give the people some other day and Stalin could not accede to the request. They had to explain that it was not practicable to give the people another day because the peasants in the far-flung agricultural provinces, while sending in their returns on Government forms in accordance with the government week, had never ceased to observe Sunday as a day of rest. The Priests had worked as labourers on the Collective Farms and on the Lord's Day conducted Divine worship for the people. What a frank confession of failure!

More recently

THE THIRD INTERNATIONALE

has been dissolved. The Soviet Government's announcement of its dissolution was received with a triumphant flourish of trumpets by some sections of the

Press, as though it was due to our influence and a tribute to our convictions. The fact is that the **Comintern** had not functioned since the outbreak of the war. Its international activities were cut off by war's commencement. The Third Internationale was dead. **Stalin and Co. only buried the Comintern Corpse.** Naturally they were not averse to our construing it as a concession to our opinions and principles and were glad to make capital and curry our favour along that line.

Before we pass to a brief review of things as they are today, let us record the statement made by the Bezboznik leader, Emelyan Yaroslavsky, in open conference in Russia before that land was plunged into the maelstrom of World War II. The utterance was subsequently printed in **Anti-Religioznik**, the leading Anti-God makazine.¹⁶ On the basis of an official census (1939) he stated that two-thirds of the people in the provinces were still deeply religious as were also one-third of those in the towns. He actually affirmed that they were practicing Christians. (Compare this with the position in France where at the last census thirty out of forty million people registered as having no religion at all) **Yaroslavsky based a threefold statement and appeal** on this census revelation. 1—Because after over twenty years of the most intense persecution religion has ever known, these numbers reflected shame on their anti-religious movement he sought to whip his hosts into more vigorous opposition, using more specious and subtle methods against the church than ever before: making flank rather than frontal attacks. 2—He did not like handing bouquets of flowery facts to the Christians, but had to acknowledge that there existed a force of active Christian laymen, over a million strong. His

16. Bezboznik (The Godless) Chief periodical of the Anti-God and Anti-religious organization, is now published only half as often as before and its circulation has diminished to one-tenth of that at the height of its propaganda programme.

statement was reinforced and brought up to date on August 22, 1941 by the Soviet Press Bureau which reported the registration of 30,000 religious associations of such evangelistic enthusiasts. The commission on religious affairs, a section of the Central Executive Committee, to which all religious groups are compelled by law to report each October has gone on record that sixty million Christians are still functioning in the U.S.S.R. True, this is a grave decrease of one-third from the ninety million reported in 1914. But judged by the realistic tests of persistence through the fires of persecution it is a most remarkable record. 3—Yaroslavsky's third point urged his followers: "Do not be deluded that religion is only a concern of the elders." He was painfully aware that religion would not die out with the old folks; that his campaign had not convinced youth of the truth of atheism; and that hosts of the young people were deeply and devoutly religious. We proceed to

TODAY

We cannot separate past, present and prospective. They cannot be separated in air-tight compartments. Cause and effect are interrelated. Sequence and consequence are conjoined.

We begin with what should be fairly obvious—that Russia is so intent and intense in the prosecution of the war that she has neither time, strength nor inclination to wage a war of conflict against Christians. That is why there has been a distinct "let up" in the realm of censorship. My friend and well-informed colleague, Dr. Rushbrooke, in his capacity as President of the Baptist World Alliance, has received a communication of a religious character from the U.S.S.R. after a silent lapse of thirteen years! The censor first allowed (or inspired) the statement to be spread abroad through press correspondents that "the government is doing all

that it can to help believers." Then by the same means it was reported that Stalin (a convinced atheist!) had called upon all Christians in Russia to pray for victory. The Baptists and Evangelical Christians were permitted to report that they now **numbered four million**. A further striking fact is that these bodies joined with their Baptist brethren who girdle the globe in the observance of Baptist World Alliance Sunday on February 7, 1943. And finally they were permitted to send their greetings to Dr. Rushbrooke and through him to their Baptist brethren.

The R.M.S. has just received a letter from Siberia—it took five months to come and is the first we have received for several years. We should dearly love to pass on its contents to our readers, but to tell the story that led up to it would only bring drastic reaction to the detriment if not, indeed, the death of the correspondent.

There is another side to this. I dare not give details or exact references to place and date. The Soviet government officials visited the apartment of one of our most spiritually-minded pastors and evangelists—a man who had never entered the political arena; who believed that he was "called to preach the gospel" and got on with his job. Two years prior to this writing the visit occurred—in the early hours of the morning. He, his wife and children were put in a cattle truck and despatched from what was (at that time) Soviet conquered and controlled territory to Siberia. We learn that rumour affirms that he is still alive. His eldest son, a brilliant boy entering on his University career, has died as a result of the deportation. The other children are scattered. The mother, without clothing or food, is faced by a government demand of one hundred roubles war tax. The leopard has **not** (really) changed its spots.

Some religious buildings are open. Groups of wor-

shipping Christians not only may, they **must** be registered. The Central Executive Committee maintains a Commission on Religious affairs, to which every such registered body must report in October. Prior to the Revolution, while Leningrad was still the Capital, there were in Moscow for a population of more than two million, 1636 Greek Orthodox churches. The Supreme Soviet sacrificed Leningrad in order to build up Moscow as their Capital City. At the end of 1938 some 18 of these churches remained open. Today with a population of approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ millions, there are 26 churches. This is not guess work. The censor made a bad break on Easter Monday last. He permitted the broadcast throughout the world that on the previous day

THE 26 CHURCHES IN MOSCOW

were full to overflowing. What a blunder! What a confession. "The 26 Churches" for $4\frac{1}{2}$ million people! In Omsk in Siberia for a population of $2\frac{1}{4}$ million, 3 ecclesiastical edifices remain open! We learn, but have no official confirmation of the statement, that there are 8,000 places of worship registered for the whole of Russia.

The government has not prevented the performance of religious rites in the churches that remain open. See Article 124 of the Constitution on page 7. Freedom of anti-religious propaganda is guaranteed. All religious propaganda is prohibited. In an earlier draft of this article, the words "religious and" preceded "anti-religious propaganda." This fact alone should convince candid readers of the reality of the government antagonism to religion. **Orthodox Russian Christians** place great emphasis on performing their religious rites at Christmas (3 days centering on January 6, the old calendar) and even greater stress is placed on keeping Easter. Surely every one can see that there

must be sufficient of these Christians out of 2¼ million to fill three churches at these great Christian seasons!

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE REGISTERED CHURCHES?

The pastor may preach to his own people therein, but he may not proclaim the gospel anywhere else. He is taken up for interrogation periodically and he comes out of the enquiry a nervous wreck. He may not have any literature on the premises except that which is absolutely essential for the conduct of Divine worship. He may not conduct any meetings for women, nor may he gather as many as 3 young people to teach them religion. No social service is permitted for if one were to ameliorate the lot of any less fortunate fellow by so doing he might indirectly influence the relieved one to be religious. That would be religious propaganda, counter-revolutionary and would result in the maximum sentence of ten years in Siberia. The building used by the church, even though it may have been erected and paid for by the church, has imposed on it a rent which increases so remarkably and rapidly that whatever sacrifices the believers make ultimately they cannot make the grade; then the local Commissar steps in, states that they haven't paid their government dues and automatically closes the building. No teacher in school, college or university is permitted to enter any place of worship in the U.S.S.R. The church is not permitted to possess a library, nor print or publish any literature. No services for the study of the Bible may be held, nor may any special prayer meetings; while organized gatherings for picnics, excursions or any social function are suppressed. The law covering these restrictions, directed primarily against evangelicals, was promulgated in 1929. It is in detail in harmony with the general provisions of Articles 124-6 of the current

Constitution. That we are not romancing can be proven by any reader caring to purchase a British government White Paper from H. M. Stationery office, C.M.D. 3511. It was in the same year that the right of propaganda for religion was excised whilst propaganda against religion was retained in the government decree.

The

BANNING OF THE BIBLE

still stands.

One of the most masterly achievements of the Soviet government has been in its

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

We will not detail the percentages which vary from Republic to Republic. The over-all average of illiteracy was 87 per cent when the educational policy was inaugurated. So great was the demand for education that in 1935/6, when I was in Moscow the government printing and publishing departments were ten months behind in the production of textbooks. Originally 25 million children went to school daily under the new scheme. Prior to the outbreak of the present war 33 million were in daily attendance. By the end of 1938 (latest date for official verifiable figures) 52 per cent of the population had passed through these day schools. More than one-half of the people—all the younger folk. The scholars were taught by teachers not permitted to enter any place of worship that there is no God, never was a Creator and they were subjected to such awful caricatures of Christianity and such blasphemous portrayals of the Lord Jesus Christ that when we show photos of them on a screen we dare not describe them. They are so blatantly blasphemous that we have to pass them by in silence. And yet all over the Soviet Union there have occurred sporadic

outbursts of **religious** revival among the young people; so much so that local leaders have appealed to Moscow to send special speakers to combat the religious revival. In support of the foregoing let me quote from my friend, Prof. Basil Matthews, author of *The Jew and World Ferment* and other important and documented works. Formerly a member of the British Ministry of Information in London he had to leave that position to fulfill a pledge to lecture in our leading New England University. He writes of the

BAPTISTS' REMARKABLE PROGRESS

"More sensational than any of the facts that I have here set down are the startling reports of contemporary growth in the Baptist Church in Russia. This Church, largely of German nurture in the nineteenth century, was fiercely repressed by the Soviet Government, especially in a wave of persecution between 1929 and 1933. Today, however, it is growing with a vigour that is wholly unexpected. The number of Baptists given by recent statistics exceeds five millions. What is more amazing still is that a number of the converts are reported to be young men and women who have been trained in the "anti-God" sessions of the Communist Youth Movement—the Komsomol. The eminent Dr. George P. Fedotoy, who was Professor of History in Petrograd University and left Russia in 1925 because of his vigorous Christian position, taught Church History in the Russian Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris till the fall of France in 1940, and is now a visiting Fellow at Yale University, says of these Baptists: "The force of the new apostles is the force of the gospel itself. They preach a simple and primitive gospel of sin and redemption, of the crucified and risen Christ, to people who have never heard of it before. Their followers are found mainly among the Communist youth who begin to feel a spiritual thirst . . . The Baptists

are followed because they have found the key to the religious need of the people. This need is the need for Christ. We can imagine, in the light of all these facts, the emotion with which Lunarcharsky, the Commissar for Education for the U.S.S.R., burst out recently with his reluctant but superb tribute: "I find that religion is like a nail; the harder you hit it, the deeper you drive it in."

To this I append in further support of my statements the following:

RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS IN RUSSIA

We reprint from the Australian Baptist the following letter dated May 4, 1942, sent by Dr. Rushbrooke to Rev. A. T. Whale, the Secretary of our Australian Section in reply to an inquiry as to the facts of Russia's present attitude to religion:

"Dear Mr. Whale,—Thank you for your letter of February 2nd, which has reached me only a few days ago.

"The situation remains precisely as it was a few months ago. No doubt there is a relaxation of the severity, for the sake of national unity; but I have not yet heard of any permission for the printing of the Bible in Russia, or for the importation of Russian Bibles, nor have I heard of any modification of the laws or constitution of the land. I sincerely hope that the new relations between Britain and the U.S.A. on the one hand, and the U.S.S.R. on the other, will lead to discussions that will issue in modification of the anti-religious attitude; but that situation has not yet arisen. Of course it is also the case that the only schools permitted in Russia—State schools—are anti-religious.

"You may have seen in the *Baptist Times* that a letter has come to me from Moscow from the Evangelical

Christians there—the first for some thirteen years. That is a sign of the present relaxation of severity; but the legal position remains, and without a definite change in it, there will be no guarantee for freedom of preaching, the carrying on of Sunday Schools, or anything else that earnest Christians care for. **It is simply untrue that there is religious liberty in Russia.** With all good wishes, sincerely yours,

J. H. Rushbrooke."

President, Baptist World Alliance.

CHANGING RUSSIA

Undoubtedly the Russian government is changing its attitude toward organized religion. Naturally we ask—Why? There is more than one answer. (1) They are too intent and intense on prosecuting the war to give time and strength to persecuting Christians. (2) "Facts are facts and facts are stubborn things." In spite of the diabolical treatment of the Jews by the Nazis; in spite of her imposing on a State paid Clergy that having "paid the piper (they) should call the tune"; in spite of their opposition to the Roman Catholic Church as a political organization; the Nazi government has not prevented the exercise of voluntary, evangelical religion and worship in Germany or in German-controlled territory. There have been and there are restrictions in some ways and in some lands but not on worship or preaching and the Russian Missionary Society has as full freedom under the Nazis as they had before. The Soviet Government would not want to be contrasted unfavorably with their Nazi foes in this respect. No doubt the Kremlin crowd realized that it was bad psychology to permit their German enemies to appear to be more liberal than themselves.

(3) But chiefly the government has had to acknowledge that its program to turn God out of Soviet terri-

tory, to eliminate religion in general and crush out the Christian Church in particular has been an abject failure. Hence a gradual climb down, which in answer to the prayers of God's people should issue in the U.S.S.R. leaders finding a way at the common council table at the close of the war to "save face," restore religious liberty to its people and so fall into line with their allies. Whatever measure of credence may be given to the above it is certainly true that slowly but surely the Soviet Government is modifying its religious policy.

(4) We need to note the part played by the Government Census Return. In 1934-5, while no outspoken change in the Government's general attitude toward religion took place; while no radical or far-reaching concessions were made to the church; unobtrusively the government soft-pedaled its anti-religious propaganda and methods were adopted which obviously were intended to placate the leaders. Anti-Christmas and Easter demonstrations ceased and the special products used in the observance of these Christian festivals reappeared for sale in state stores and markets; the illumination of Christmas trees was permitted. In December, 1935, a more substantial concession was made. The children of the clergy who had been denied the lot of other children, were permitted to be enrolled in any school. A year later another positive and progressive step was taken in the so-called "Stalin Constitution" (which is still in force). While not changing the relations of church and state or school and church Article 124 granted freedom for the performance of religious rites but without missionary enterprise or the right to proselytize. The Government was forced to face the absolute failure of its anti-religious policy. The census of January, 1937, carried a question concerning religion. The figures were never made public. An attempt was made to discount the facts by attrib-

uting them to Trotskyite influence or manipulation (which is absurd). It is claimed that 40% of the population returned its answer as being religious. The Soviet Press contained statements akin to those given concerning children and youth used in another place. So, when the Government census was again taken in January, 1939, the question concerning religion was eliminated. But that could not do away with the underlying facts which the government had already begun to deal with. In the Autumn of 1937 the conciliatory attitude of 1934-5 was changed. Bishops and priests were arrested, subjected to a mock trial for espionage or counter-revolutionary practices. More places of worship were closed; far more than in 1929-30. The Government, however, endeavored to draw a distinction between religious leaders and the rank and file; an admission of and concession to the power and influence of the latter. This in turn led to a reversal of government policy. In January, 1939, when the so-called "New Religious Policy" of the Soviet Government was inaugurated by an edict to stop all attempts at liquidating religion by drastic means such as the arbitrary closing of church buildings, it was admitted that the anti-religious activities of the government has been too extreme and had provoked reaction in favor of believers. In fact it was argued that it was a mistaken interpretation and application of the teaching of Karl Marx. "A real Marxist should understand that at certain historical periods and under certain conditions, Christianity could be a progressive force. Such was its function in the early centuries of its existence when it had a definite democratic and even revolutionary character; so, historically, Christianity was the precursor of Russian Communism, which succeeded and was superseding it. So treat your parent with a little respect even if you have outgrown his old-fashioned ways."

(5) Again, commencing with the negative aspect we record that the Atheist's Union played a prominent part in this change. Em. Yaroslavsky, in their conference in 1938, exclaimed, "You cannot create a Socialistic State in a country where half of the people who do not believe in God believe in the Devil." The Congress reached the astounding decision to cease attacks on churches and the coercion of Christians. They had to face failure for the numbers of the "Militant Godless" fell from five million in 1933 to two million in 1937, while at the outbreak of war it stood at only one million. Here Stalin stepped in and in September, 1941, gave orders that all Atheistic literature should cease publication. But why? Had Stalin been converted? Yes and no! It depends upon what we mean by conversion. Russian Evangelicals had always been averse to bearing arms. The majority refused to do so. But Stalin wanted these Christians in the all-out war effort. How striking that God should overrule war in this respect and make "the wrath of man to praise Him." The military censorship in the Finnish war revealed that the majority of the soldiers wrote home in a religious strain. Russian soldiers in the Baltic and Poland showed veneration for religious symbols and attended church, while in Bessarabia the Russian civil leaders had their children baptised and supported the churches. Even within the U.S.S.R. there developed a wider expression of religion. Because the government was so intent on prosecuting the war, more folk gathered courage to go to and fill the churches that remained open. Still more churches opened their doors, more particularly in the rural areas. When war broke out "Pravda" (means "Truth," the official organ of the Communist party) ran an article reporting that at Easter the churches that were opened were full. Crowds including hosts of children had attended. Even a majority of the members of the Komsomol (Com-

munistic Youth) were being married by the church. Civil officials did not go to their offices on religious feast days. Wedding rings were sent hundreds of miles to be "blessed" prior to marriage. If a believer died and no priest was available, a handful of earth was sent to be "blessed," returned and placed in the coffin or on the grave. The Soviet government was compelled to admit the truth of Lunarcharsky's statement—"Religion is like a nail. The more you hit it on the head the more you drive it home." The Orthodox priests who had been imprisoned were released though no public official proclamation of it was made. Priests, not only accompany the Red Army, but have permission to celebrate Greek-Orthodox rites for the soldiers. Finally in September, 1943, as we go to press, Stalin has agreed to the Orthodox Church request and has stated that he had no objection to the convoking of a council at which a Patriarch of the church was to be elected.

THE PROSPECT

POLITICALLY is promising. The vigorous challenge of the social and economic Marxian programme as put into force by the Soviets has not only accomplished great things but it has stirred to the depths the Church and called forth from its heart a real response. Many of the clergy and laity are in sympathy and ready to coöperate with the government in any and every forward move for the good of the people; in working out a more just and equitable economic and industrial life. This has been made possible by the passing into the background of the industrial organism of Russian Communism as at first planned and pursued. We should not think of classing the writer of "Mission to Moscow," Ex-ambassador J. E. Davis, as an adverse critic of Russia. He has written that "the government has developed into what is now a system of State Socialism operating on Capitalistic principles,

and steadily and irresistibly swinging to the right. With ever-accelerating momentum we may confidently anticipate the continuance and extension of the movement."

EDUCATIONALLY the prospect is excellent, based on the splendid success already achieved (see page). There is no ban on the reading of a Bible that a family may have in its possession. That **Bible is an open book** as it never was before because the majority of the people can read. By 1938 the percentage of illiterates had been reduced to 14 per cent in the most remote agricultural areas and 5 per cent in urban districts. From 87 per cent to 14 per cent and 5 per cent is a magnificent achievement. Reading makes a wise man and thinking a ready man. Russians are being taught to read, the libraries are thronged, they are thinking for themselves. Ultimately they will demand an actual active part in the government: that what is theirs potentially may be made theirs practically. In view of the devout spirit of most Russians this can only have one issue. When the British educated the Indians they turned around and said in effect: "We can govern ourselves; we do not need you any more." Surely something along similar lines must issue internally from Russian culture and Christian influence, so we proceed to the

RELIGIOUS forecast for the future. During World War I the German government gave every facility to R.M.S. Russian evangelists to visit and minister to **Russian Prisoners of war** in interment camps. God owned their ministry. In one camp alone they baptized 646 converts. These men went back to Russia after the armistice, carrying with them the Sacred Scriptures in their Mother tongue. It is by their personal evangelism, by the worth of their lives, the witness of their lips, their individual impact and influence on their fel-

lows, that they have wooed and won their fellows until the Soviet government has had to admit that in spite of the banning of public preaching the increase of the Evangelical Christians has been in the ratio of 6 to 1 as against the increase of membership in the Communist Party sponsored by the Government. **What may we expect along this line?** What shall we write of the demand made by Russian prisoners of war in European Internment Camps? These men who had not seen, handled, and some not even heard a word of the Bible quoted in Soviet Russia (where since May, 1929, it has been a criminal offense to print, publish, distribute or circulate any portion of God's Word) asked for the Scriptures in their own tongue to such an extent that there was not a copy left in Europe.

BIBLES THROUGH BARS

was the result. The British and Foreign Bible Society and the Scripture Gift Mission desired to issue a joint edition of the New Testament in Russian, but could not secure the paper. The American Bible Society was appealed to. They asked Dr. Louis D. Newton of Druid Hills Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, to raise a fund of \$3,250 to enable them to print a Russian New Testament and Psalms. He appealed to the Southern Baptists. They responded with \$15,338.07, which amount has all been spent in providing Russian New Testaments and Psalms. The chief German official in Geneva has now issued authority for the distribution of these New Testaments and Psalms in Russian prisoners' camps in Germany and German-controlled lands. This work, begun on a small scale by the Russian Missionary Society during the last war (they printed 81,000 Russian Bibles in one edition: the largest ever issued) has now extended beyond the bounds of imagination. It is being carried on in languages other than Russian. Only limitations of space

prohibit the telling in full of this amazing story. Meantime in answer to the question "Will there be a revival of religion in Russia?" we reply in the Word of the Lord, "My Word shall not return unto me void. . . ." "No word of God is void of power."

Through the war between Germany and Russia the **Ukranian gate has been flung wide open.** All the stocks that the Russian Missionary Society has stored along the Polish Ukranian Border have been carried into the U.S.S.R. Thus is the Word of God being distributed by thousands of copies in the land to which its importation had been prohibited by the government. So God makes the wrath of man to praise Him. Let us not only pray that the door may remain open, but let us now flood the U.S.S.R. with Testaments while it is yet today!

SOCIAL development has taken place to such an extent and will advance at an accelerated pace after the war so that it will become increasingly impossible for Stalin and Co. to openly fight Christianity and so antagonize the majority of the common people so that they will resent the governmental curtailment of their religious liberty and will refuse to contribute their necessary quota to the country's development. It may not be realized by many of our readers that Russians have been **a great missionary agency** in the past. Even the Orthodox Church sought to proclaim the gospel as they understood it to the folk of the **Siberian Steppes** and over into the tents of **Nomads** and homes of the **Mongolians** and even in **Eastern Monasteries**. In the 19th Century Veniamonov braved the winter weather of the **Aleutians** and **Mchalka** in order to win souls. His book written in Aleutian, "Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of God" went through 46 editions. He became Metropolitan of Moscow in later life and assisted in founding the Orthodox Missionary Society in 1870. Even later **Nikolai Xasatkin** spent two-thirds

of his 70 years as a Missionary in Japan, where he opened a theological seminary, trained Japanese priests, coöperated with Protestants and sent an affectionate message of greeting to the great Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. He died in 1912, but left behind 30,000 Orthodox Japanese Christians to carry on his testimony. If these things could and did happen in Czarist days what may occur in and through a more enlightened, educated and enthusiastic band of deeply-taught Christians is beyond mind to measure!

Russian members of Evangelical Churches believe that

EVERY MEMBER IS A MISSIONARY

They do not leave the work of evangelism to a one-man ministry; they get on with the job. What then may we expect as the outcome of an enlarged evangelical church after the war? Surely the latent forces of evangelism will become potent in the propaganda of the gospel! The evidence certainly seems to show that Russians may become one of the most potent forces in the Universal church. Surely then we should seek to open every window to fellowship and every door to opportunity to redeem the time "and buy up the opportunity" while we may. So we draw to a close with a brief reference to challenge to play

OUR PART TODAY.

(1) **To train Russian Evangelists**, to answer the claimant call when the war ends. Our R.M.S. Bible School in Warsaw is necessarily in a state of suspense. Some of our tutors are in this county. We shall re-constitute it as speedily as possible when the war ends. Meantime Dr. W. B. Riley, whose building up of the Northwestern Bible School and Theological Seminary is a "marvel in our eyes" has opened a Russian Dept., with Dr. Vojta as Dean, for the express purpose of

training Russian Evangelists in readiness to meet that clamant challenge. We are privileged to coöperate. There is no limit to what can be prepared along this line but that imposed by the funds available.

(2) **To build up a Reserve Fund** to enable us to rush a host of Evangelists into the U.S.S.R. when the war ends. Russian work in North America must decrease as the older folk die and the young folk who use English take their membership in English-speaking churches. But there is no limit to aggressive and progressive work among the Slavic Races in Europe and Asia. The British, American and Canadian sections of the R.M.S. are all concentrating on the raising of such a sum that will be adequate to meet the tremendous need.

(3) **To print, publish, circulate the Word of God** in Russian, Ukranian and other Slavic languages to make up for the time and influence lost through the Soviet ban.

(4) **To give ourselves to Prayer**, unceasing, interceding prayer. We may well say to the Russians what Samuel of old said to the people of God—"God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way." (I Samuel 12:23)

In Atlantic City recently under the "black out" a drunken sailor was walking along the boardwalk toward midnight. He had a wooden leg. It stuck in a knot hole. He continued to walk till day dawned, round and round, and when light broke he was still in the same place. When Christians pray "from Dan to Beersheba" they do a lot of traveling but they do not arrive anywhere. **Let us focus our prayers on a practical objective.** Faced by failure of its attack on religion the Soviet government may seek to find a way to save face while restoring religious freedom. Surely they might find it at the common council table at the

close of the war when they will desire to curry favour with their allies and secure every concession they can. We should pray definitely and enlist the prayerful co-operation of our fellow Christians to this definite and all-important end.

But as Myconius said when he left the Monastery, in which he had remained behind when his friend sallied forth, to stand side by side and serve shoulder to shoulder with Martin Luther,

“Prayer is not enough.”

We should practice as we pray by supporting the service rendered by The Russian Missionary Society, Inc. A copy of their N. American issue of *The Friend of Russians* will be sent post free on application to 1844 W. Monroe St., Chicago 12, Ill., U. S. A.; or 106 Warrett Ave., Toronto 9, Ont., Canada.

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"RUSSIA," by Sir Bernard Pares, Director of Slavonic Studies in the University of London, England. Penguin Books, London & New York. 25 cents. Thorough, reliable though brief outline of Soviet conditions.

"CHURCH AND RELIGION," by Prof. Milinkoff, 80-year-old Russian authority and author of many works in European languages on this theme. \$2.50. One of three works on Russian Culture published by the Pennsylvania University.

"RELIGION IN SOVIET RUSSIA," by N. A. Timasheff, Professor of Sociology, Fordham University, author of several books on similar themes. Undoubtedly the best, thoroughly documented work on Religion in the U.S.S.R. It covers the period 1917-1942. \$2.00. The Penguin Book can be obtained wherever the P. B. books are sold. The others can be obtained at published prices from the R.M.S., 1844 W. Monroe St., Chicago, Illinois.

For the convenience of readers the constitutional development as it relates to religion is here given:

(1) *The decree of Jan. 23, 1918.* "freedom of conscience and religious societies." Separation of church and State. Article 13 of the constitution of Jan. 6, 1918. "In order to secure for the toiling masses a real freedom of conscience, the Church is being separated from the State, the schools from the church, and freedom of *religious* and anti-religious *propaganda* is recognized for all citizens."

(2) The committee preparing the First Constitution of the U.S.S.R. drafted the famous formula—"religion is the private affair of citizens." But this was not acceptable to the party leaders, so article 13 of the constitution of the Russian Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics, as above, was substituted.

(3) But this was altered—Article 124 of the Constitution of May 22, 1929, still in force—"Freedom of religious *worship* and freedom of anti-religious *propaganda* is recognized for all citizens"; which was interpreted by "Pravda" as "freedom for the *performance of religious rites* and freedom of anti-religious *propaganda*."

THE AUTHOR

of this booklet is a world-wide traveler, lecturer, Bible Teacher and Conference speaker. In North America he has ministered at the Moody Bible Institute Founder's Week (3 years); Montrose Ministerial Institute (3 years); 3 Conferences at the American Keswick, more frequently at the Canadian Keswick; at Erieside; Atlantic City Boardwalk; Medicine Lake; Winona Lake and other Conferences. He has preached in leading pulpits such as Calvary Baptist, New York; Church of the Open Door, Los Angeles; Moody Memorial Church, Chicago; for Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, Philadelphia, etc.

His services are available without financial stipulation, either with or without reference to the work of the Russian Missionary Society, Inc., of which he is the International Secretary, and into the Treasury of which he pays all fees and the profits from the sale of his books.

Application should be made to
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